DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 397 882 JC 960 483

AUTHOR	Shoemaker, Connie L.
TITLE	Results of Survey of Community College ESL Programs.
INSTITUTION	Arapahoe Community Coll., Littleton, CO. Spring International Language Center.
PUB DATE	Jun 96
NOTE	6p.; Materials used in a presentation at the Annual Conference of NAFSA: Association of International Educators (48th, Phoenix, AZ, June 4-7, 1996).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrative Organization; *Community Colleges; Educational Practices; *English (Second Language); *Enrollment; Financial Support; Foreign Students; *Institutional Characteristics; National Surveys; Program Design; *Student Characteristics; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

To gather background data for a workshop on English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction at community colleges, 180 colleges across the United States were surveyed regarding ESL programs and problem areas. Completed questionnaires were received from 34% of the colleges, representing 60 ESL programs in 13 states. Study findings included the following: (1) only 7 of the 60 programs were privately run, while more than half of the remaining college-funded programs were in departments other than English or Foreign Language; (2) 20% of the programs were intensive, offering 20 to 25 hours per week, while 51% were semi-intensive, offering 10 to 19 hours per week; (3) the number of students served per semester ranged from 6 to 3,000 at California's Orange Coast College; (4) 54 programs cited Asian cultures as one of their major groups, while 42 mentioned Hispanics; (5) 50 of the colleges indicated that they used a placement test, with in-house tests being the most common instruments used; (6) an average of only 32% of the teachers hired into the ESL programs were full-time; and (7) major problem areas cited by respondents included housing for international students, unwillingness of non-ESL faculty to adapt instructional methods to meet ESL students needs, the quality of advising, and funding. The survey instrument is appended. (BCY)

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Results of Survey of Community College ESL Programs

By

Connie L. Shoemaker
Spring International Language Center

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RESULTS OF SURVEY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL PROGRAMS

In order to provide background information for a NAFSA Field Service Workshop, a survey was sent to 180 community colleges across the United States. The 37-item questionnaire attempted to gather information about ESL programs and to identify problem areas (see attached Survey).

Thirty-four percent of the ESL programs responded to the survey. Respondents were from thirteen states: California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. Only seven of the 60 ESL programs were proprietary (private); the remainder were college-funded. More than half of these programs were housed in departments of the college other than English or Foreign Language, i.e., Developmental Studies, Arts and Humanities, ESL and Linguistics, and so on. One-fourth of the programs were under the direction of the English Department.

Twenty percent of the ESL programs were intensive (20-25 hours per week); fifty-one percent were semi-intensive (10-19 hours per week); fifty-eight percent offered academic ESL support courses, some of these in addition to semi-intensive or intensive; and 44 per cent offered adult education classes.

The number of students per semester served by intensive or semi-intensive programs ranged from six to 3,000. It must be noted that a number of respondents were not aware of the student count and did not answer this question. The largest programs were in California with Orange Coast College listing 3000 students (with only 400 on student visas) and Long Beach City College tallying 1800-2000 (with only 15 on student visas). Outside of California, Seattle Central listed 1500 students in their ESL classes per semester (no knowledge of number on student visas) and Union County College in New Jersey tallied 1100.

Fifty-four of the 60 respondents listed Asian cultures as one of the major groups, with Hispanic noted by 42 respondents. Russian and Armenian, ranked third and fourth, with all other cultures receiving 1-6 responses.

In differentiating students with student visas (international students) from immigrants, it was discovered that the California colleges which responded had fewer than 10 per cent on student visas. The largest international student population (student visas) was at Broward Community College in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, which reported 1000 international students and 2300 immigrants. Portland Community College in Oregon reported no students on student visas but 6000 immigrants enrolled in their adult ed courses.

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The number of levels in intensive programs ranged from two to thirteen. This may indicate a misunderstanding of the number of hours an intensive program comprises.

Fifty of the colleges responding used a placement test, with the most-used instrument being an in-house test, followed by the CELSA (some used a writing sample with this), and the SLEP. Other tests used included the STED, the Michigan, the STEL, the BEST, the CELT, the CASAS, the TABE, and the LOEP. Fifty-five per cent of the tests included reading, fifty-three per cent included grammar, and 48 per cent included writing. Only 30 per cent focused on oral skills, 37 per cent on listening, and 12 per cent on vocabulary.

The percentage of full-time teachers employed in these programs ranged from 0 to 100 per cent. An average of all responses, however, indicated that only 32 per cent of the teachers hired into the respondents' programs were full-time.

In the final section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rank a number of areas on a scale from very poor to excellent. Major problem areas indicated (in order of severity) were housing services for internationals on campus or in the community, willingness of non-ESL faculty to adapt instructional methods/techniques to effectively meet ESL students' needs, quality of advising/student support services for both internationals and immigrants, social/cultural activities for ESL students, and adequacy of funding for ESL courses and programs. All of these items ranked in the below average to poor categories.

Top ranking items, in the good to excellent categories, were success rate of ESL students in non-ESL courses in college, access of ESL students to non-ESL courses in college, procedure of placement into ESL class levels, ease of movement from ESL classes into regular courses, and relationship of ESL program to host institution. Comments added to this section included: "When additional instructors are needed, anyone who can speak English is brought in...without much consideration of ability or knowledge of ESL."

"Too many second language students for classes offered. When students cannot get enrolled in ESL classes, they enroll in other open classes for which they are not prepared and generally fail. They then get into ESL when their name finally comes to the top of the waiting list. Non-ESL faculty are trying to establish prerequisites that do not discriminate. We could probably turn our campus into an ESL school to the detriment of other academic disciplines." (California)

"Adequate, appropriate class rooms."

"Pell grants are not available to university graduates."

"Multi-level classes."

"Recognition of ESL instructors' expertise. We are not consulted when major decisions are being made, e.g. lowering TOEFL requirement from 500 to 450 for admission."

"Understanding the cultural viewpoint of ESL students."

"No language lab."

"Cohesion, college politics."

"Retention, lack of literacy in native language..."

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The results of this survey will be used as background information to broaden the knowledge of participants in the NAFSA Field Service Workshop, "ESL in Community Colleges: Unique Problems, Unique programs" and will serve as a focus for design of the workshop to meet participants' needs.

A SURVEY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL PROGRAMS

The results of this survey will provide background information for a NAFSA Field Service Workshop, "ESL in Community Colleges: Unique Programs, Unique problems." (See enclosed brochure for additional information.)

In order to help workshop participants gather information and identify and address problem areas, we would appreciate your assistance in completing this questionnaire and returning it in the enclosed envelope.

Name of Host College_____

Name of ESL Program_____

Check one:
Proprietary ESL Program_____ College-Funded ESL Program_____

If college-funded, where is ESL Program housed? In English Dept. ___ In foreign language Dept.____ Other_____

Type of ESL Program offered (Check as many of the following that apply to your situation):
Intensive (20-25 hrs. per week)___, Semi-Intensive (10-19 hrs. per week)___, Academic ESL support courses ___, Adult ed courses___

If you have an intensive or semi-intensive program, number of students per semester/term____

Major cultures represented in total ESL student count:
1)_____, 2)_____, and
3)_____

Approximate number of international students on student visas_____ and approximate number of immigrants _____ in ESL classes.

Number of levels in intensive program_____

Do you give a placement test to determine levels?_____
If yes, which one? _____

What skills are included in placement test?_____
_____

Percentage of class hours taught by full-time teachers_____

English proficiency requirement for admission into your community college: TOEFL score of _____
MELAB score of _____
Other_____

O.	Willingness of non-ESL faculty to adapt instructional methods/techniques to effectively meet ESL students' needs	1	2	3	4	5
P.	Adequacy of funding for ESL courses/programs	1	2	3	4	5
Q.	Quality of orientation program for internationals/immigrants	1	2	3	4	5
R.	Quality of advising/student support services for internationals/immigrants					
S.	Articulation agreements with four-year institutions	1	2	3	4	5
T.	Housing services for internationals on campus or in community	1	2	3	4	5
U.	Social, cultural activities for ESL students	1	2	3	4	5
V.	Community support of international and/or immigrant students	1	2	3	4	5
W.	Other problem areas:_____ _____	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE CIRCLE LETTERS OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS IN ABOVE LIST.

Name of person completing form:_____

Title:_____

Address:_____

_____

_____

Telephone:_____ FAX:_____ E-Mail_____

PLEASE RETURN SURVEY TO: Connie Shoemaker
Spring International
Arapahoe Community College
5900 S. Santa Fe Drive
Littleton, CO 80120